CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A dynamically configurable maintenance and control system for threat scanning machines located in an airport, the system comprising:

   a threat scanning machine in the airport, adapted to communicate via a network; and

   a control computer, adapted to communicate via the network with the threat scanning machine and to dynamically re-configure the system by selecting a threat scanning machine for addition to the system;

   wherein said selecting is performed in real time in response to current conditions in the airport.

2. The maintenance and control system of claim 1, wherein one or more control computers are connected to a central control computer and said one or more control computers are adapted to facilitate centralized maintenance and control of multiple threat scanning machines.

3. The maintenance and control system of claim 2, wherein the control computer can transmit operational software to the threat scanning machine and command the threat scanning machine to reprogram with operational software and operate with operational software.

4. The maintenance and control system of claim 3, wherein the control computer can collect data from threat scanning machines and store said data.

5. The maintenance and control system of claim 4, wherein the control computer can display images from threat scanning machines.

6. The maintenance and control system of claim 5, wherein the control computer can transmit test images to threat scanning machines.

7. The maintenance and control system of claim 6, wherein the control computer can transmit threat profiles to the threat scanning machines.

8. The maintenance and control system of claim 7, wherein the control computer generates reports containing information about the performance of threat scanning machines.

9. The maintenance and control system of claim 8, wherein the control computer maintains a list of authorized users of the threat scanning machines and a list of the access credentials of the authorized users and the control computer transmits said list of authorized users and said list of access credentials to the threat scanning machines.

10. The maintenance and control system of claim 9, wherein the control computer is a portable computer.

11. The maintenance and control system of claim 10, wherein the communication network is a wireless network.

12. A method of centrally maintaining and controlling threat scanning machines located in an airport, the method comprising:

connecting a control computer to a communication network;

connecting a threat scanning machine to a communication network;

loading the control computer with software to communicate with threat scanning machines;

initiating communication between control computer and threat scanning machine; and

dynamically re-configuring the network by the control computer selecting a threat scanning machine in real time in response to a condition.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of transmitting operational software from the control computer to the selected threat scanning machine.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of transmitting operational parameters from control computer to threat scanning machine.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of receiving data from threat scanning machines in the control computer.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of receiving images from the threat scanning machines in the control computer.

17. A computer program fixed in a tangible medium, the program comprising:

means for controlling a system of threat scanning machines via a network;

means for dynamically selecting a threat scanning machine for addition to the network in real time in response to a condition; and

means for dynamically restricting access of a threat scanning machine to the network.

18. The program of claim 17, wherein the means for dynamically selecting comprises means for identifying an activity taking place in an area near the selected threat scanning machine.

19. The program of claim 18, wherein the area is a portion of an airport.